**Hitler and his “unmerry” men take control from 19933 when he becomes Chancellor of the Weimar Republic.**

His cabinet only contained two NSDAP (nazi) members. It was composed of sufficient hangovers from the recent conservative and aristocratic past governments to keep the “despicable little Austrian” (Burr) under control.

In this way, the nation would have its “leader from the people” and von Papen, von Schleicher and von Hindenburg could all carry on managing Germany.

WRONG!

Hitler’s presence on the political stage in 1933 was the result of a quite extraordinary turnaround in political thought and philosophy.

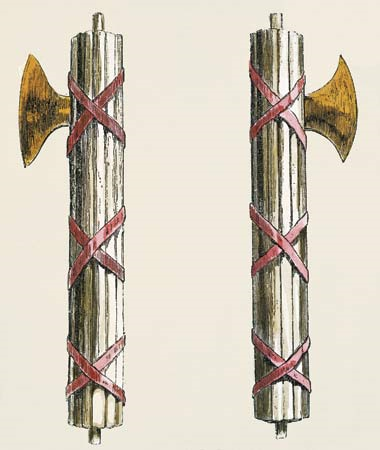
1. The loser of 1924 (Hitler) had made a commitment to attaining power by legal rather than illegal means and by ballot rather than the bullet.
2. By 1933 he had put together an organization which would do that job, and more for him.
3. His party, the National Socialist German Workers Party (NAZI0 held the largest single bloc of Reichstag seats.
4. The Nazis were fascist in nature and philosophy. What did that mean?

**The NAZI Creed – Fascism**

The word fascism comes from the *fasces* of Ancient Rome. Fasces were bundles of canes in the middle of which was an axe and, carried by the magistrates of Rome on formal or State occasions.

They were symbols of the State’s power to inflict corporal and capital punishment on its citizens for transgressions of the law.

This idea has great relevance to modern fascism, for the fascist state claimed exactly the same powers over its citizens.



**In fascist philosophy, the state was all-supreme.**

1. Citizens existed in order to work for the greater good and glory OF THE STATE.
2. In that context, the individual was held to be of no importance in anything other than the ability to work FOR THE STATE, AND THE STATE HAD TOTAL CONTROL OVER HIS DESTINY AND ASPIRATIONS.
3. From this concept comes the definition of the fascist state as a TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY.

**At the head of this anti-individualist state stood the only individual it permitted – the Leader.**

1. The Leader was the director and planner of all the endeavours of the state.
2. In fascist philosophy he was a supreme being of iron will and all-seeing wisdom who dedicated his life to the service of the nation and its destiny.

**Because a unified state was the desired aim, it followed that any sectional interest was counter-productive.**

1. Employers’ organizations, trade unions, churches and exporters’ associations were examples of sectional groups. These groups may have aims and interests that primarily served the members rather than society and which were, therefore, in fascist philosophy, anti-social.
2. For the same reason, capitalism was antisocial in its clear determination to make profits for only a few.
3. Democracy of course was quite beyond fitting into fascist philosophy because of its associations with individual freedoms, open discussion of matters of state and the right to dissent – argue. These aspects of democracy were considered all enormously divisive and non-unifying influences within a fascist state.
4. It was also argued that sectional interests were unnecessary in the fascist state because the direction of the omniscient Leader made competition within society redundant.

Question:

1. What were the two reasons put forward for the need to quash sectional interests within a fascist state?
2. What is meant by “its clear determination” in no. 2?
3. List some of the freedoms that exist under democracy.

**It might be supposed that the other branch of totalitarianism, Communisms, would find favour with the fascists because it, too, preached submission to an all-inclusive state, but this was not so.**

1. Communism was, in the very words of its chief prophet Karl Marx, founded on an awareness that any state featured strong divisions based upon class. Fascists disagreed. They didn’t want to acknowledge the existence of any classes within society.
2. Also communism was international in outlook and aimed at the creation of a worldwide workers’ order in which individual nations were much less important than fraternal (brotherhood) ties between workers of all nationalities across all nations.
3. For the fascists, communists promoted division within the state at the expense of national unity.

**Fascism may also be seen as a form of ultra-nationalism.**

1. Fascists *glorified* the **soil,** the **blood**, the **language** and the **culture** from which a nation sprang.
2. It was only a short step from this position to a belief that the success of the state demonstrated the superiority of its culture over those of less-favoured states.
3. In turn this led to the inevitability of **struggle**, both internal and external. To keep this superiority.

**The fascists state existed in a permanent state of struggle, and this state of struggle justified any of the Leader’s actions.**

1. An elite nation had to be **constantly on guard against the activities of non-elite groups within it.**
2. At the same time in needed to **extend its** **influence**/sway over less-favoured and jealous groups outside its border who **sought its ruin.**

Questions:

1. It could be argued that fascist philosophy was paranoid. Explain with examples from above.

This philosophy provided the plueprint for the Nazi state – the Third Reich that followed the Weimar Republic.

However, it would be a mistake to see the fascist state as one that operated according to these, or indeed any, rules.

Ideology was there to justify long-term actions and to be ignored when circumstances dictated quick action.

Fascism was all about will and power – the will of the Leader to do anything which his all-seeing wisdom thought best and the power of his elite to make it reality.

**Between 1930 and 1933 the Nazi Party more than doubled its Reichstag presence in going from 107 to 288 seats. With the voting assistance of the Nationalist Party, Hitler had a narrow majority in the 608-seat legislature.**

**Burr thinks that Hitler got this surge in popularity because of the social and political climate in Germany.**

1. The deep-seated hunger of Germans for **stability and order**. In terms of a Nazi programme that fed on public opinion in just those areas, **the Nazis appeared to have something for everyone**:
2. Culturally aware Germans liked the back-to-basics, ‘blood and soil” approach of the Nazis and their insistence on the racial superiority of the “volk” or German people.
3. Disgruntled Germans soaked up Nazi propaganda of the Dolschstoss (stab in the back0 and the iniquity of the Treaty of Versailles.
4. Working-class Germans relished Nazi promises of jobs and a new welfare state in which the worker would be protected by a state that cherished its people.
5. Middle-class Germans wanted an end to the economic uncertainty which menaced their savings and their prospects of social mobility – going up a class…
6. Upper-class Germans, mostly notably the Junker class, looked forward to the leadership roles which an expanded Germany would bring them.
7. Any German born before 1914 hungered for the respect in which the world had once held Kaiserine Germany.

Hitler came to power with the expressed intention of ending the Weimar Republic. It would be mourned by few, as it had appeared to consistently fail to deal with German grievances, wants or aspirations.

In presenting himself as the leader who could do just those things, Hitler committed himself to ending the Republic by legal means.

This underlined his claim to acting as the heart and soul of Germans everywhere.

The means he used were technically legal but of doubtful morality. His response to the burning of the Reichstag building in February 1933 was to blame the communists and, the next day, announce a decree which effectively banned the party together with any group which “threatened” the people or the state.

Under this decree, Hitler could assume wide-ranging powers of suppression: association, of press freedom, of freedom of speech itself.

With the Communists banned, their representation in the Reichstag lapsed. The Socialists suffered the same fate and other small parties were not slow to grasp the general drift of events nor the realities of political life in a Reichstag which was, to all intents and purposes, a one-party affair.

In March 1933, through the Enabling Act, Hitler was given the power to govern for four years without reference to the Reichstag.

To all intents and purposes, the Republic was dead. But Hitler maintained the charade whilst other parties “voluntarily” wound themselves up until, in July 1933, the National Socialists were declared the only legal political party in Germany.

*The way was clear for the implementation of fascist policies in the running of the state.*

Questions

1. Why do you think the other parties “voluntarily” wound themselves up?
2. What is suppression?
3. What is association?
4. Why were trade unions unwelcome in fascist states?
5. Which was more important to the fascist state, the national or the international outlook?
6. What was the basis of Nazi appeal to the masses?
7. What was Hitler’s master-stroke in the assumption of power?
8. Match Column A with Column B

A B

i. Autarky a.A political creed that stresses nationalism

ii. Dolchstoss b. The romanticized German people

iii. NSDAP C. Measure very similar to Article 48

iv. Fascism d. German initials of the Nazi Party

v. Communism e. Practice of looking after one’s own

industries

vi. The Volk f. The “Stab in the Back”

vii. Enabling Act g. A political creed that stressed

internationalism

**The Emergence of Nazism as an HISTORICAL FORCE – AS 2.5**

**An historical force might be defined as a “pressure” of ideas, influences and activities which seems to drive events and people in a certain direction.**

**The spread of ideas, conflicts, economic changes and political movements can ALL ACT AS HISTORICAL FORCES.**

Word File

Darwin – scientist who developed the theory of evolution proposing that life progressed through a series of adaptations to environments. Those species which did not adapt could not survive. Social Darwinism then, was the extension of these ideas to the humankind: the survival of the fittest and smartest.

Nietzsche – a philosopher who claimed that evolution created “supermen” to lead the most advanced beings in each generation, and that their actions created progress.

Dosshaus – emergency hostel for the poor and homeless in Vienna.

**Below is the 2009 external exam questions related to the Weimar Republic and the Nazi State Topic:**

History 90469, 2009

You are advised to spend 50 minutes writing your essay in this booklet.

**Themes and Related Topics**

**Theme C: Government and Political Change**

• The American Revolution and the Making of the Republic 1774–1791

• Authority and Dissent in Australia 1788–1850s

• Revolution in Russia

• The Weimar Republic and the Nazi State

• Participation of Women in the Emerging British Democratic System 1860–1930

• From Colony to Nation: New Zealand Government 1840–1947

• The Search for Political Unity: Māori Socio-Political Structures 1900–1990

**Forces and Movements** In history, there have been major forces and movements that have had an influence on people’s lives. Such forces and movements have included: Authoritarianism Autocracy Colonialism Communism Conservatism Democracy Enfranchisement Fascism Feminism Gandhi’s Satyagraha Imperialism Industrialisation Kīngitanga Kōhanganui Kotahitanga Liberalism McCarthyism Mau in Western Samoa Muslim League Nationalism Pan-Slav Movement Racism Religion Revolution Socialism Sons of Liberty Sovereignty Suffrage Superpower rivalry Temperance Tino Rangatiratanga Totalitarianism Viet Minh War Young Italy

**INSTRUCTIONS** Choose ONE historical force or movement from one of the topics you have studied this year, and use it to respond to the essay topic below.

**Essay Topic Describe and explain how a force or movement influenced a specific individual or group of people to try to improve the lives of their fellow countrymen and women. Describe and explain how successful these attempts were.** Begin by planning the essay on the planning sheet provided on page 4. The ideas below will help you, but add your own knowledge as well.

**Introduction** – write an opening paragraph that **briefly** identifies:

• the force or movement you have chosen, and its historical setting

• the specific individual or group you have chosen

• how the historical force or movement influenced the specific individual or group of people to try to improve the lives of their fellow countrymen and women

• how successful these attempts were.

**Body** – write structured and sequenced paragraphs that describe and explain:

• how the historical force or movement influenced the specific individual or group of people to try to improve the lives of their fellow countrymen and women (*the influences may include causes of actions and / or related events*)

• how successful these attempts were.

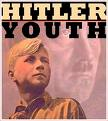
**Conclusion** – write a concluding paragraph that sums up the main ideas and links them back to the focus of the essay.

You should aim to write about 600–800 words.

**Essay Topic Describe and explain how a force or movement influenced a specific individual or group of people to try to improve the lives of their fellow countrymen and women. Describe and explain how successful these attempts were.**

**Plan your essay here:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Selected historical force or movement | Selected topic or setting | Specific individual or group |
| How the historical force or movement influenced a specific individual or group of people to try to improve the lives of their fellow countrymen and women (*the influences may include causes of actions and / or related events*). | | |
| How successful these attempts were. | | |

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